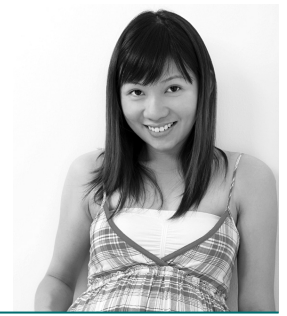


# Weight Gain During Pregnancy in Washington State



## What is Excessive Gestational Weight Gain?

Excessive gestational weight gain occurs when a woman gains more weight during pregnancy than is recommended by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) for her pre-pregnancy body mass index (BMI). In 2009, the IOM revised the recommended range of weight women should gain during pregnancy based on their pre-pregnancy World Health Organization (WHO) BMI category.<sup>1</sup>

The recommendations come in light of new research associating excessive weight gain with adverse maternal and child health outcomes including large for gestational age (LGA) birth, cesarean delivery, gestational hypertension and diabetes, lower breastfeeding rates, maternal postpartum weight retention and obesity, and other metabolic and cardiovascular risk factors.<sup>1-8</sup>

| 2009 IOM Gestational Weight Gain Recommendations by WHO BMI Category |                          |                                |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Pre-pregnancy BMI  | BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> ) | Total Weight Gain Range (lbs.) |
| Underweight  | <18.5                    | 28 – 40                        |
| Normal Weight  | 18.5 – 25.9              | 25 – 35                        |
| Overweight   | 25.0 – 29.9              | 15 – 25                        |
| Obese (all classes)  | ≥30.0                    | 11 – 20                        |

The association between excessive gestational weight gain and postpartum weight retention is especially concerning given the high prevalence of obesity in the United States. According to Ogden et al, approximately 36% of women were obese in 2009–2010.<sup>9</sup>

## What Do Women Gaining Excessive Weight in Washington State Look Like?

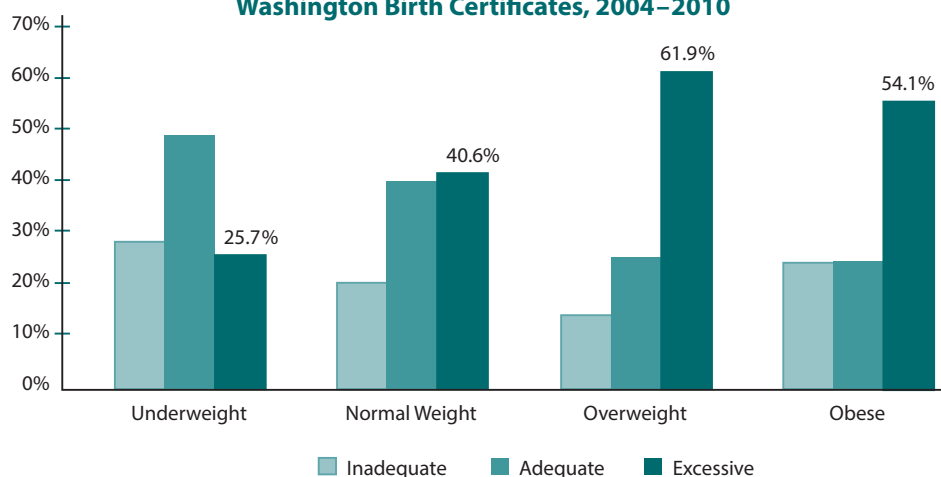
Between the years 2004–2010, almost half of all women (48.6%) gained more than the IOM recommended amount, putting themselves at risk for long term chronic health issues. These women when compared to those who gain a healthy amount of weight:

- Have a higher average pre-pregnancy BMI and are more likely to be overweight or obese.
- Regardless of pre-pregnancy BMI, are younger, primiparous, and non-Hispanic white women.

- Are more likely to receive intensive prenatal care, develop gestational hypertension, and deliver an LGA infant.

While women who gain excessive weight are more likely to be overweight or obese, 40.6% of normal weight women gained excessive weight during pregnancy from 2004–2010. This includes 15.3% of normal weight women who gained more than 10 pounds over the recommended amount.

**Pregnancy Weight Gain Category by Body Mass Index, Washington Birth Certificates, 2004–2010**



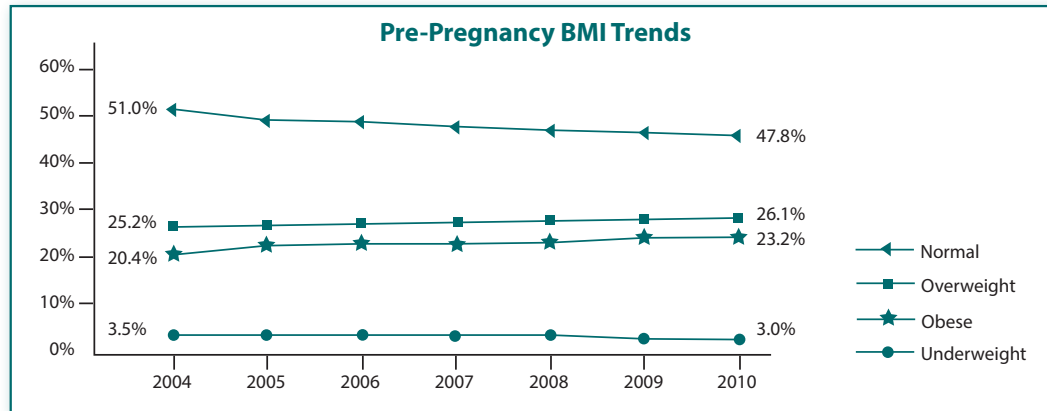
### Source:

Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2009. *Weight Gain During Pregnancy: Reexamining the Guidelines*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

## BMI and Weight Gain Trends

Between the years 2004–2010, almost half of all women who gave birth began pregnancy as overweight or obese (47.6%). Over these last seven years, the percent of women beginning their pregnancy at a normal BMI has decreased by 3.2%. While the average pre-pregnancy BMI has

increased over time, the average amount of weight gained during pregnancy has only slightly changed during the same period. Given that almost half of women are gaining excessive gestational weight and another 20% start pregnancy at an unhealthy weight, this is clearly an important issue facing many women of child-bearing age and their families.



## What Is Being Done About It?

Some evidence suggests that women who have direct, supportive, and non-judgmental weight gain discussions with their health care provider are more likely to stay within the recommendations.<sup>10, 11</sup> Newer research tells us that not many obstetric providers advise pregnant women about weight gain and of those who do, some are not recommending weight gain according to the new IOM guidelines.<sup>12, 13</sup>

The Department of Health developed the *Healthy Weight Gain During Pregnancy: A Clinician's Tool* to support providers in the screening, assessing, and promoting a healthy weight gain among pregnant women. This clinical practice guideline educates obstetric providers and nutritionists about appropriate weight gain during pregnancy, based on the IOM's recommendations. The document provides tips for monitoring and counseling, and lists references and

resources: <http://here.doh.wa.gov/materials/healthy-pregnancy-weight-gain>

We also developed the handout *Healthy Weight Gain During Pregnancy* for pregnant women to help them gain the appropriate amount during pregnancy. This sheet contains tips for good nutrition and physical activity, space for goal setting, and web resources. The sheet is available in English, Spanish, and Russian: <http://here.doh.wa.gov/materials/pregnancy-weight-gain>

We promote healthy weight gain during pregnancy through the Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC) and the Parent Help 123 website:

WIC: [www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/WIC.aspx](http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/WIC.aspx)

Parent Help 123: [www.parenthelp123.org/pregnancy/during-pregnancy/nutrition-pregnancy](http://www.parenthelp123.org/pregnancy/during-pregnancy/nutrition-pregnancy)

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